regarding ratification of international treaties. The practice differs from country to country depending upon the form of Government and on the type of treaty. In India, while the Government is empowered to sign and ratify international treaties, Parliament enacts enabling legislation, wherever required, to implement the treaty.

Sponsorship for Secretary-General of UNO

1068. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to sponsor an Indian currently holding diplomatic assignment in the UNO for the post of Secretary-General;

(b) if so, the details of the field-work done in relation to this sponsorship and the countries or group of countries contacted in this behalf; and

(c) whether this sponsorship impact on India's claim to a seat in the security council as a permanent member?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of India announced the candidature of Shri Shashi Tharoor, an Indian national, who is currently Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information at the United Nations, for the post of the Secretary General of the United Nations on 15 June, 2006. Government is actively engaged with other member States to mobilise support for Shri Tharoor's candidature. Besides the ongoing demarches by our Heads of Mission abroad, Government has pursued this issue in several high level meetings with other countries. Government has also facilitated Shri Tharoor's meetings in connection with his candidature, as necessary, including his recent visit to the African Union Summit in Banjul (The Gambia) and his informal meetings with various regional groups at the United Nations in New York.

(c) No. Sir. These are separate issues and Government continues to actively follow up India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, for which there has been a steady accretion of support.

Appointment of Ambassadors

1069. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Ambassadors appointed from May, 2004 onwards till date;

(b) the number out of them who are retired bureaucrats and from public life, separately; and

(c) the details regarding those belonging to SC/ST and minority communities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Appointments of 94 Ambassadors/High Commissioners have been made by the Government from May, 2004 till date.

(b) Of of above, 4 are retired Government servants while 6 are eminent personalities from public life.

(c) A total of 13 Ambassadors/High Commissioners belonging to the SC and ST communities have been appointed since May, 2004. The Government does not maintain records of religious affiliations of Government servants.

Indian Baha'i in Iran

1070. SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government received representation from 3,50,000 Indian Baha'i living in Iran about gross human violation, denial of university education and report of Asma Jehangir, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief about the identification of Baha'i in every trade and profession since 1979, execution of some follow Baha'i and gradual cleansing to Baha'i in Iran; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) No representation has been received from Baha'is living in Iran, who are Iranian nationals. India believes in the protection of human rights and the observance of rule of law and expects all countries to abide by their international commitments.

Passport offices at Tiruchi

1071. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Passport office at Tiruchi caters to a maximum number of applications from Madurai and nearby region;